

MEMORANDUM

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DATE: November 20, 2014

SUBJECT: Operational Position Statement for Nov 18, 2014 – Dec 1, 2014

The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) is responsible for managing Lake Okeechobee water levels and makes operational decisions about whether to retain water or release water based on their regulation schedule release guidance (2008 LORS). The USACE makes this decision taking into account the best available science and data provided by its staff and a variety of partners, which includes the South Florida Water Management District (SFWMD).

The SFWMD team has discussed the system wide environmental conditions, the water supply conditions, and has evaluated the overall status of the water management system. Detailed reports are available at the SFWMD [Operational Planning](#) internet page.

For the period November 18 through December 1, the SFWMD supports the implementation of releases to the Caloosahatchee Estuary measured at S-79 and no releases to the St. Lucie Estuary. Estuarine scientists concur with the USACE plan to conduct a 14-day pulse release which would average 1200 cfs for the 14-day period, distributed as 1200 cfs for both the first and second 7-day periods. This scenario maintains an average, beneficial flow of 1200 cfs. The lake stage remains within the Low Sub-band and total inflows to the lake remain low. This recommendation aligns with 2008 LORS release guidance which allows for a range of zero to 3,000 cfs to the Caloosahatchee and zero to 1,170 to the St. Lucie to manage the Lake Okeechobee stage. We understand that these releases will start Friday, 21 November 2014 at 0700 hrs and end on Friday, 05 December at 0700 hrs.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part C): Given the current Lake Okeechobee stage position, Part C of the 2008 LORS suggests “Up to Maximum Practicable to the WCAs if desirable or with minimum Everglades Impacts”.

Consistent with the LORS release guidance, the USACE is requesting the SFWMD to continue maximum practicable Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases to the WCAs. Agricultural operations in the EAA and above target stages in the STAs over the past week have limited these operations. For the on-coming days, Lake regulatory releases to the WCAs will be treated in STA-2 or STA-3/4 or a combination of both. Deliveries to northwest WCA-3A are still recommended to maintain good hydration with the prevailing dry season conditions. SFWMD is also routing Lake releases into the Holeyland and Rotenberger areas through STA-3/4.

2008 LORS Release Guidance (Part D): The outcome from Part D of the 2008 LORS release guidance is: “S-79 up to 3,000 cfs and S-80 up to 1,170 cfs”. Release guidance did not change compared to the last two previous weeks.

The USACE is presently conducting a 14-day pulse release averaging 1,000 cfs at S-79 and no releases at S-80, which started 0700 hrs on November 07, 2014 and will end 0700 hrs November 21,

2014, with 800 and 1200 cfs as the average flows for the first and second weeks respectively. The current release implementation is measured at S-79 and requires that the Lake Okeechobee releases (at S-77) be reduced to account for any local runoff into the Caloosahatchee River (C-43) between S-77 and S-79. This accounting is performed on a daily basis.

Summary of System Conditions

Weather and Climate

For the period November 4 to November 17, substantial rainfall over the District took place on November 8 and 9, with frontal activity showing again on November 17 over the Upper Kissimmee area. District wide rainfall depths were 1.05 and 0.33 inches for the two weeks in the November 4-18 period. For the coming week below average rainfall is expected.

Current Conditions and Operations

As of November 17, Kissimmee lakes are at or below their respective regulation schedules, with most the lake deviations ranging from 0 to 0.4 feet, but with Lakes Kissimmee, Hatchineha, & Cypress about 1.0 feet below schedule. Flow through S-65 remains near 300 cfs. Inundation depths in the Kissimmee River floodplain have continued to decrease over the past week. Rainfall activity on November 17 is generating stage increases in the Upper Kissimmee lakes.

The November 18, 2014 Lake Okeechobee stage (reported by the USACE as the stage on November 17rd, 2400 hours) was 15.62 feet NGVD. The lake stage had a net decrease of 0.10 feet over the past two weeks. The lake stage is about 0.19 feet lower than a month ago, about 0.68 feet higher than one year ago and 0.7 feet below the historical average.

Daily release rates at the lake structures, averaged for the week ending November 17, were estimated as 634 cfs at S-77 and 0 cfs at S-308. At the tidal structures, average daily discharges were about 1056 cfs at S-79 and 58 cfs at S-80. The proportion of S-77 releases in the S-79 flows remains about constant. Lake Okeechobee regulatory releases south were conducted this week, through S-354 into STA 3/4 with STA discharges directed to NW WCA-3A, Holeyland and Rotenberger. Regionally, water supply demands are increasing.

Water Conservation Area water levels are continuing to recede due to dry conditions. The optimum Dry Season recession rate would be between -0.05 to -0.09 feet per week.

SFWMD Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocol (AP) Release Guidance

This week the SFWMD is not applying the Lake Okeechobee Adaptive Protocol release guidance flowchart since the Lake Okeechobee stage is above the Base-flow Sub-band of the 2008 LORS. The Adaptive Protocols process is documented in the District publication Final Adaptive Protocols for Lake Okeechobee Operations (September 16th, 2010).

For additional information pertaining to operations history and past recommendations, refer to the archives of LORS-2008 Release Guidance outcomes and operational position statements at www.sfwmd.gov under the Operational Planning topic.